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Subject:

Let me outline the three intellectual property rights that apply here

Patent: prohibits others from making, using, distributing or selling a patented invention for a period of up to 20 years. Its a rather long and expensive process to obtain a patent, but the advantage is that the inventor has a temporary monopoly in his or her market. The disadvantage is that after 20 years the patent is released to the public. At this time anyone can COPY, use, distribute and sell the invention. The Tetris game mechanics (tetromino pieces falling, the rotation and translation of such pieces, the clearing of rows, etc) were never patented. Even if they were, they have since expired (2005).

Shakers in the clear

Copyright: prohibits others from copying the creative expression of an idea. This covers "original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic and other intellectual works" (USPTO). The Tetris Company owns a copyright on the audiovisual effects of certain Tetris Games (Family Tetris, Magical Tetris, etc). This means first: I can not break in, steal the TC's code, and use it for my game. Second: it also means that I can not reproduce any audiovisual effect that does not stem directly from Tetris game mechanics (see Altai test).

Upon close inspection of Shaker, you will see that every visual effect stems directly from common game mechanics (score, level, menu, title), the original Tetris game mechanics and rules (tetromino pieces, grid, next piece), or their new creative theme (skulls, martini glass, etc). Shaker clearly has nothing to worry about here.

Trademark: The Tetris Company owns a registered trademark on the use of the word TETRIS (and "confusingly similar" variants thereof) as well as the Tetris Logo. The word Shaker is in no way similar to the word TETRIS.

note: some would argue that the word TETRIS has come to refer to the generic genre of falling block tetromino games and is no longer uniquely associated with the TC. Therefore, the TC's trademark rights could be contested in court (and TC could very likely lose). However, since the Tetris Company acquired its trademark in 1991, it has not